

# Hot air balloonists to convene at JSC



The Ballunar Lifftoff Festival begins at 6 p.m. Friday with bluegrass music and a Grand Parade of balloon pilots. A balloon glow, last year's event seen above, will cap the evening starting at 7:30 p.m.

It's that time of year, when the Texas weather forecast becomes a bit repetitive. But the early morning hours present ideal conditions for ballooning. With that in mind, the skies will once again be speckled with bright Crayola colors and vibrant, quilt-like patterns as dozens of hot air balloons christen Ballunar Lifftoff Festival and Open House weekend August 25 – 27. More than 100 balloons are expected to take part in what has grown to become Texas' largest balloon festival.

"Ballunar Lifftoff continues to grow in attendance and awareness," said Claudette Alderman, executive director

of the Festival. "Ballunar is one of the most popular balloon events with balloon pilots making it an invitation-only event for them. Adding the JSC Open House at the same time as the Festival has proven to be a win-win for both. Giving the public access to the nerve center of America's space program truly exemplifies the purpose of the festival."

The festivities begin 6 p.m. Friday with a bluegrass music concert and a Grand Parade of balloon pilots. The evening is capped by a balloon glow starting at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday the balloons will rise with the sun – this time geared up for some games

of their own. A balloon "key grab" begins at 7 a.m. followed by skydiving, hang gliders, model rockets and sport kite demonstrations. Saturday evening, the air will resonate with the sounds of the legendary Max Q 'Astronaut' band.

Sunday begins with a balloon flight and skydiving competitions followed by more aerial feats and astronaut appearances. On the ground, an arts and crafts fair will intrigue visitors throughout the weekend while food booths satiate their palates. Rockit Scientist will entertain that afternoon.

"Rarely do we find people in the surrounding Houston/Galveston area that have

not heard about Ballunar Lifftoff Festival," said Alderman. "Again this year we are looking forward to demonstrating the earliest form of human flight to a record attendance."

Festival hours are 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. Friday; 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. Cost is \$3, children age 11 and under admitted at no charge. ■

For more information about the 7th Annual Ballunar Lifftoff Festival call the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce at (281) 488-7676 or visit their Web site at <http://www.ballunarfestival.com/>.



## Safety tips for Open House

As we prepare for the upcoming Open House weekend – it's important to remember safety as a top priority. This year, we expect more than 100,000 visitors to JSC, many of whom will be children and elderly and will present unique safety considerations.

Open House volunteers will attend a training session, which includes safety, but it's important for all of us to keep these issues in mind for our upcoming visitors.

Mary Lee Meider of the Occupational Safety and Quality Assurance Branch offers these reminders:

Take extra care when driving and crossing streets on site during Open House. Visitors may not be aware of our regulations such as crossing streets at crosswalks or stopping cars for pedestrians at crosswalks.

A nurse-staffed first aid station will be available in the Bldg. 8 clinic lobby during Open House. The clinic's ambulance also will be available.

The emergency number is x33333. It will be on the back of volunteers' badges. Drink plenty of fluids. Houston's climate and extended periods outdoors can make people prone to dehydration. JSC will have more free water stations located around site near information booths this year, as will Ballunar Lifftoff.

Be prepared to help visitors evacuate during a fire alarm by directing them to stairs on upper floors and building exits.

Check your tour area throughout the day for potential hazards – including tripping hazards or slipping hazards, sharp objects/edges along the tour route, and shock hazards (exposed wires).

As you check for hazards, keep in mind a lot of children will be among our guests.

Safety professionals will be walking around and available all day to help with any issues that may arise. ■